

Appl. No. 09/708,036

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph at page 22 lines 9-26 with the following:

Although in the connection engine described above the node network table is distributed among the processor nodes 32 with each node storing information related to its links as described above with reference to Table 1, this need not be the case, and in other arrangements information could be distributed differently. For example, the connection information could instead be provided in the cross connect, with processing information stored in the processor nodes. In any event, it can be appreciated that the connection engine 2026 replicates the structure of the physical communications network 20 by the connections provided among the processor node-instances, so that a topological connection problem of the network 20 can be addressed by applying it to the connection engine 2026, and then using the results to manage connections in the communications network 20. As described above, the allocation of instances of the processor nodes 32 to different network devices enables a relatively small connection engine to represent a relatively large communications network.